

**DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ABC REVOKES LIQUOR LICENSE OF CLOVIS OLD-TOWN BAR**

**Clovis** – The California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) today took away the liquor license of Henry's Cantina at 622 Fifth Street in Old Town Clovis. The action was the result of a joint undercover investigation by ABC and the Clovis Police Department into illegal drug activities at the location.

ABC Fresno District Office Administrator Chris Weldon said the action supports the Clovis Police Department's no tolerance policy when it comes to drugs in their community. Said Weldon, "The sales of narcotics will not be tolerated in an ABC licensed business."

The license was ordered revoked, with the revocation stayed for 180 days to allow the transfer of the liquor license to another person acceptable to the Department. An indefinite suspension of the liquor license begins immediately until the license is transferred. If not transferred within the 180 days it will be deemed revoked.

The investigation involved an undercover ABC investigator purchasing methamphetamine from the bartender on five different occasions between February and April of 2000. The transactions were conducted in the open at the bar with other patrons present. In one instance the bartender had been drying freshly-cooked methamphetamine in plain view on the top of the toilet tank in the women's restroom.

Although the licensees claimed they had no knowledge that drug dealing was taking place in their business, they did know the bartender had a prior history of involvement with drugs. The bartender was later convicted of possession and sales of illegal narcotics and was sentenced to four years and eight months in State prison.

During a two-and-a-half-year liquor license appeals process, the licensees had hearings before an administrative law judge, and later the ABC Appeals Board, which is a three-judge panel appointed by the Governor. In both instances the ruling was in favor of the revocation of the license. The licensee then appealed to the Fifth District Court of Appeal seeking a writ of review which, after six months, was denied.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.